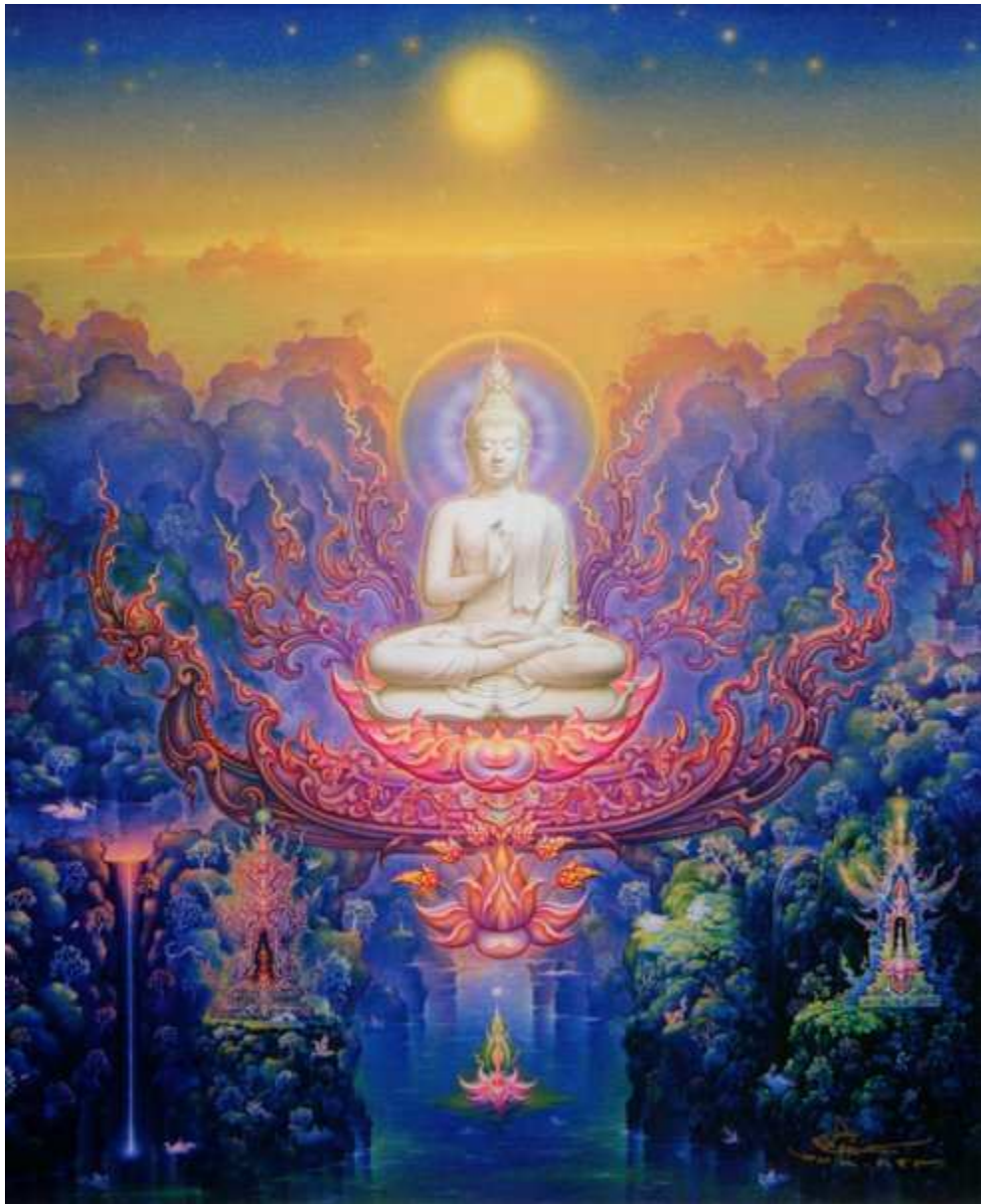


# Fifty

## Spiritual Giants



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# Mahavira

(Vardhamana)

599 BCE – 527 BCE

*Indian sage, established the central tenets of Jainism*

A living body is not merely an integration of limbs and flesh but it is the abode of the soul which potentially has perfect perception, perfect knowledge, perfect power, and perfect bliss.



As gold does not cease to be gold even if it is heated in the fire;  
an enlightened man does not cease to be enlightened  
on being tortured by the effects of karma.

# Buddha

(Siddhartha Gautama)

563 BCE – 483 BCE

*A spiritual teacher on whose teachings Buddhism was founded*

Do not seek perfection in a changing world.  
Instead, perfect your love.



The secret of health for both mind and body is not to mourn for the past, worry about the future, or anticipate troubles, but to live in the present moment wisely and earnestly.

# Shantideva

*8<sup>th</sup> Century*

*Indian Buddhist scholar*

Life is a series of choices and sometimes your only choice  
is what your attitude will be.



My foes - desire, hatred, and their kindred - are without hands,  
without feet. They are neither cunning nor valiant. How do they  
enslave me? They dwell in my spirit, and there at their ease they  
smite me. I will never turn back from fighting them.

I make war on them all.

# Milarepa

1052 - 1135

*Revered as the greatest poet-saint in Tibetan history*

When you are strong and healthy, you never think of sickness coming, but it descends with sudden force like a stroke of lightning. When involved in worldly things, you never think of death's approach; quick it comes like thunder crashing round your head.



When you run after your thoughts, you are like a dog chasing a stick: every time a stick is thrown, you run after it. Instead, be like a lion who, rather than chasing after the stick, turns to face the thrower. One only throws a stick at a lion once.



# Dogen Zenji

1200 – 1253

*Japanese Zen master and founder of the Soto school of Zen*

One mistake after another is also true practice.



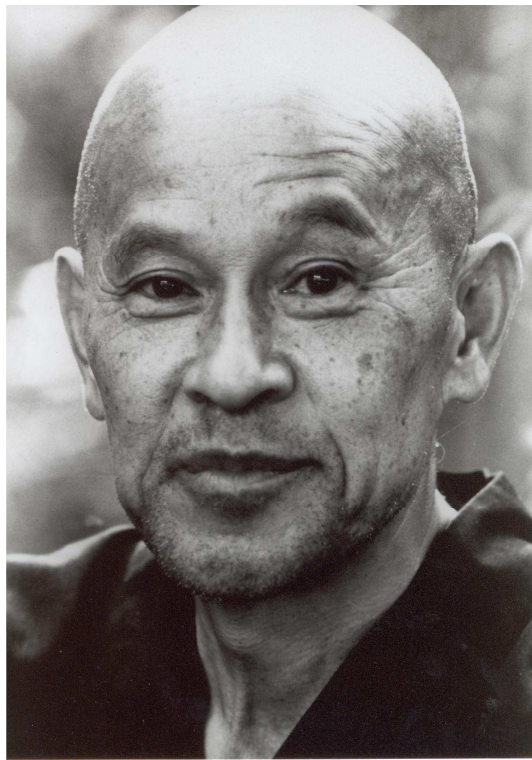
Those who seek the easy way do not seek the True Way.

## Suzuki Roshi

1904 - 1971

*Japanese Soto Zen priest, author*

Meditation is the expression of your true nature;  
it is the activity which appeases your inmost desire.



Repetition, for no special purpose and without end, is the way to follow the cosmic order. The point is not to look for something, but to practice. Continue until you reach your coffin. If you practice every day, after a while you no longer have to think about practicing or decide or want to practice. So repetition is very important.



# Ajahn Chah

1918 – 1992

*Buddhist monk, teacher, founder of two major monasteries  
in the Thai Forest Tradition*

Strengthening the mind is not done by making it move around as is done to strengthen the body, but by bringing the mind to a halt, bringing it to rest.



What can we take for certain? Nothing! There's nothing but feelings.

Suffering arises, stays, then passes away. Then happiness replaces suffering - only this. Outside of this, there is nothing. But we are lost people running and grabbing at feelings continuously.

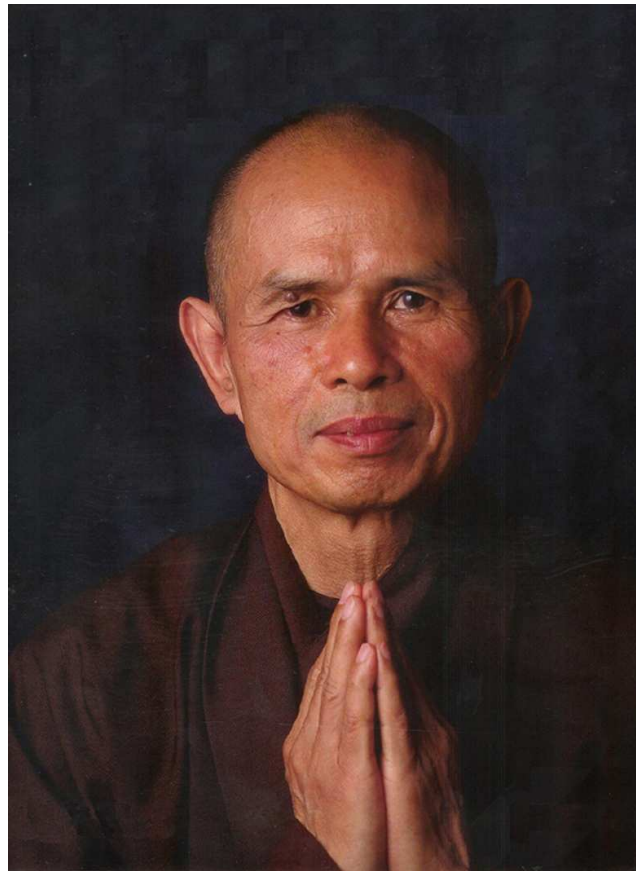
Feelings are not real, only changes.

# Thich Nhat Hanh

*1926 - Present*

*Zen master, monk, teacher, author, peace activist*

People usually consider walking on water or in thin air a miracle. But I think the real miracle is not to walk either on water or in thin air, but to walk on earth. Every day we are engaged in a miracle which we don't even recognize: a blue sky, white clouds, green leaves, the black, curious eyes of a child -- our own two eyes. All is a miracle.



The "awakened" person is recognized by particular signs. First of all is liberty; he does not allow himself to be tossed about by the vicissitudes of life, by fear, joy, anxiety, success, or failure. Then there is the spiritual force that reveals itself in calmness, an ineffable smile, and deep serenity.

# The 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama

Tenzin Gyatso

*1935 – Present*

*Most influential figure of Tibetan Buddhism*

My religion is very simple.  
My religion is kindness.



I find hope in the darkest of days,  
and focus in the brightest.  
I do not judge the universe.

# Lao-tzu

*6<sup>th</sup> century BCE*

*Chinese philosopher and founder of Taoism*

Not all spiritual paths lead to the harmonious Oneness.  
Indeed, most are detours and distractions, nothing more.



Understand this if nothing else: spiritual freedom and oneness with the Tao are not randomly bestowed gifts, but the rewards of conscious self-transformation and self-evolution.

# Confucius

551 BCE – 479 BCE

*Chinese philosopher*

Men's natures are alike; it is their habits that carry them far apart.



Our greatest glory is not in never falling,  
but in rising every time we fall.



## Chuang-tzu

369 BCE – 286 BCE

*Chinese philosopher; chief interpreter of Taoism*

When the shoe fits, the foot is forgotten. When the belt fits, the belly is forgotten. When the heart is right, 'for' and 'against' are forgotten.

No drives, no compulsions, no needs, no attractions  
then your affairs are under control.

You are a free man.



Love of colors bewilders the eye and it fails to see right.  
Love of harmonies bewitches the ear, and it loses its true hearing.  
Love of perfumes fills the head with dizziness. Love of flavors ruins  
the taste. Desires unsettle the heart until the original nature runs  
amok. These five are enemies of true life. Yet these are what men of  
discernment claim to live for. They are not what I live for.  
If this is life, then pigeons in a cage have found happiness.

# Seneca

*4 BCE – 65 AD*

*Roman Stoic philosopher*

How much better to pursue a straight course, and eventually reach that destination where the things that are pleasant and the things that are honorable finally become, for you, the same.



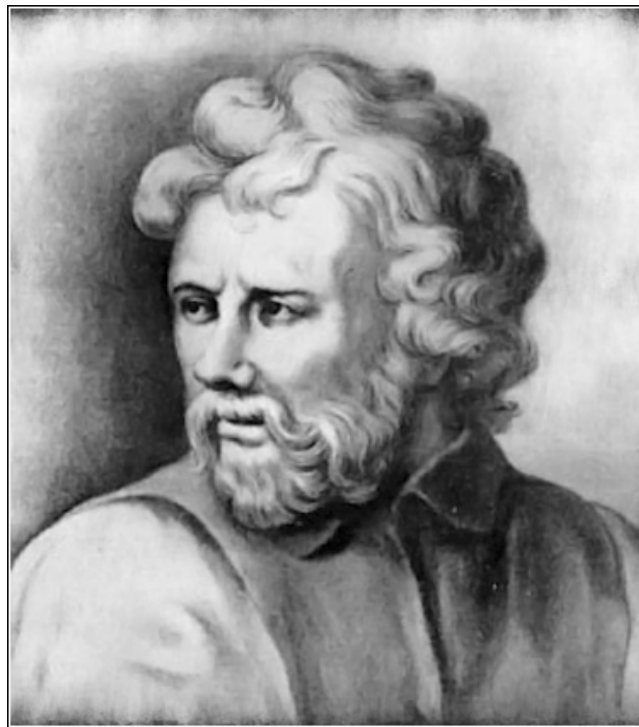
I persist on praising not the life I lead, but that which I ought to lead.  
I follow it at a mighty distance, crawling.

# Epictetus

55 - 135

*Greek Stoic philosopher*

Do not seek to have events happen as you want them to, but instead want them to happen as they do happen, and your life will go well.



I am always content with what happens;  
for I know that what God chooses is better than what I choose.

# Marcus Aurelius

121 – 180

*Roman emperor and Stoic philosopher*

Remember this – that very little is needed to make a happy life.  
It is all in your way of thinking.



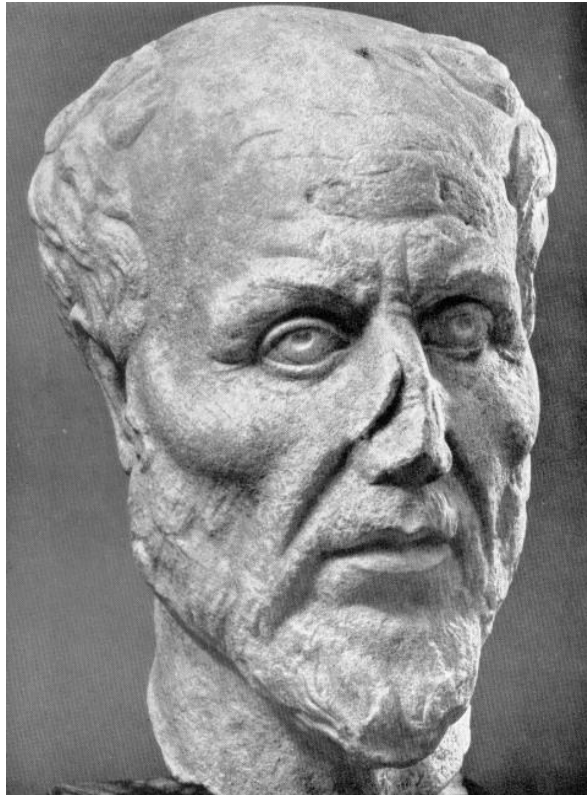
When you arise in the morning, think of what a precious privilege it is  
to be alive - to breathe, to think, to enjoy, to love.

# Plotinus

204 - 270

*Major philosopher of the ancient world, founder of Neoplatonism*

Without virtue, God is only a word.



Mankind is poised midway between the gods and the beasts.

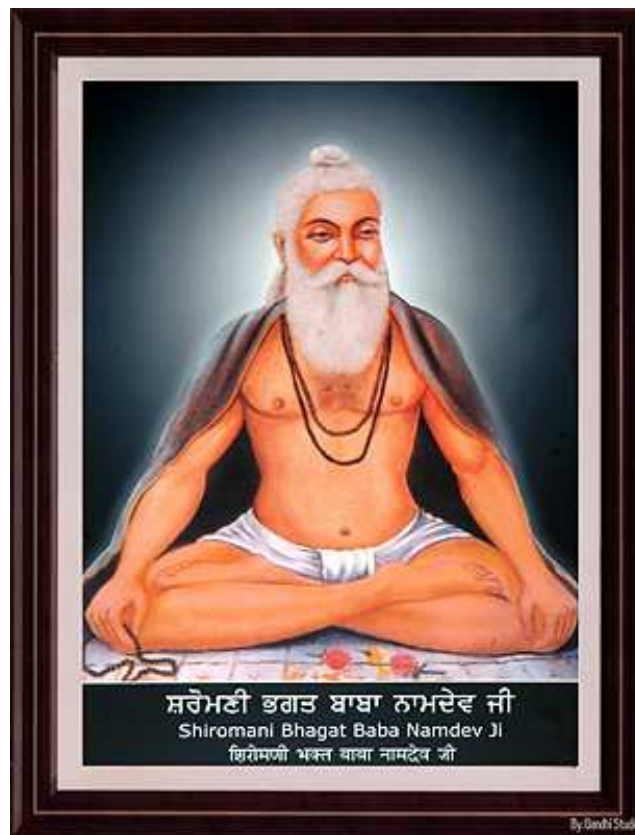


# Namdev

1270 - 1350

*Taught the practice of Sant Mat meditation – Yoga of the Sound Current;  
Heralded the coming of the Bhakti movement*

The time spent in devotion to the Lord, or in the company of a saint,  
is the only time worthwhile in your life.



This world is a market, and we have come here for a while as traders.  
Those who have sought and labored, find manifold blessings,  
others lose even the capital they have brought.

# Kabir

1398 - 1448

*One of the greatest mystic poets of India*

Doubt, the ruthless hunter, lurks within your body;  
his arrow has pierced the flawless diamond of your soul.



Such is the world, it is easily led away by nonsense;  
but when it hears of the Path of Truth, it rejects it as false.

# Guru Nanak

*1469 - 1539*

Founder of Sikhism, proponent of Yoga of the Sound Current

In this path let your foot take a step forward always and never turn  
your face backwards. Make good in this very life  
so that there will be no more rebirth.



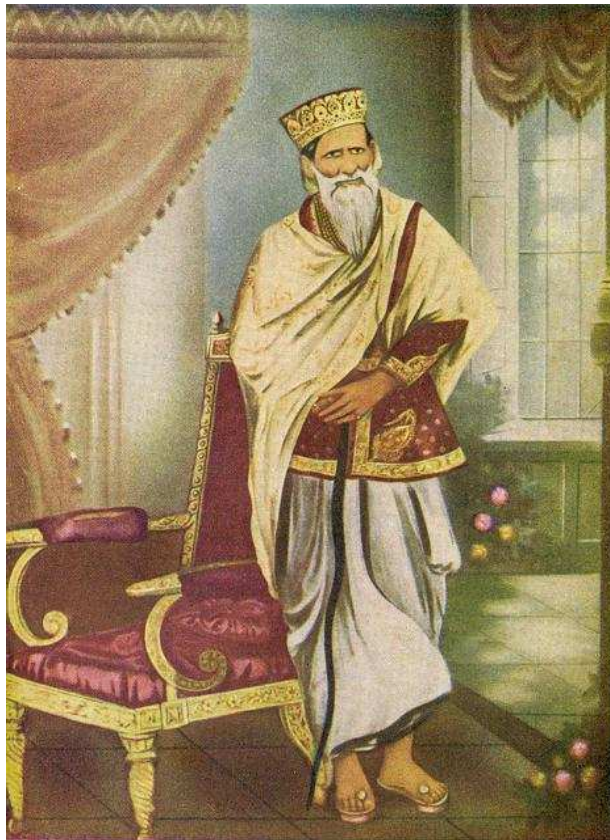
At the ambrosial hour of the early dawn,  
be ye in communion with the Divine Word,  
and meditate on His glory.

# Soami Ji Maharaj (Seth Shiv Dayal Singh Ji)

1818 – 1878

*Revived the teachings of ancient Masters including those of the later times like Kabir and Nanak; with emphasis on the Surat Shabd Yoga or Yoga of the Sound Current*

The disciple does not abstain from the things which he has been told to, but instead he blames the Master for not getting any progress.



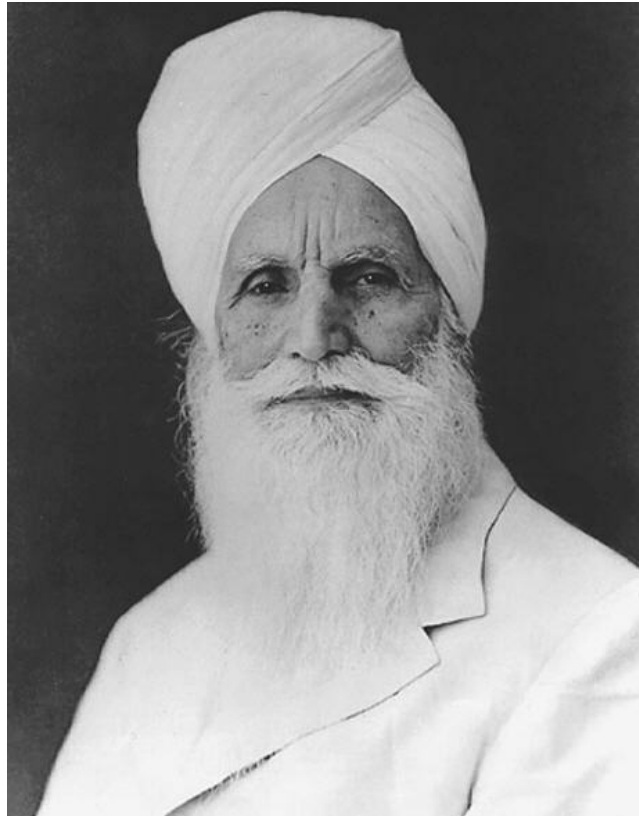
Effort and grace go together. Without grace, effort would not be possible, and without effort there will be no grace. Dependence on grace alone will make you lazy, and then effort would not be possible.

# Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji (The Great Master)

1848 – 1958

*Satguru in the Sant Mat tradition also known as  
Surat Shabd Yoga or Yoga of the Sound Current*

Your inability to concentrate properly is due to your worldly desires, which must be brought under control till you reach the point when love of God becomes an all-consuming passion, and you consider it the be-all and end-all of your existence.



The process of cleaning is going on, and after all, what is a ten or twelve years' period, or even one lifetime, in which the karmic accounts of all the previous innumerable lives has to be settled!

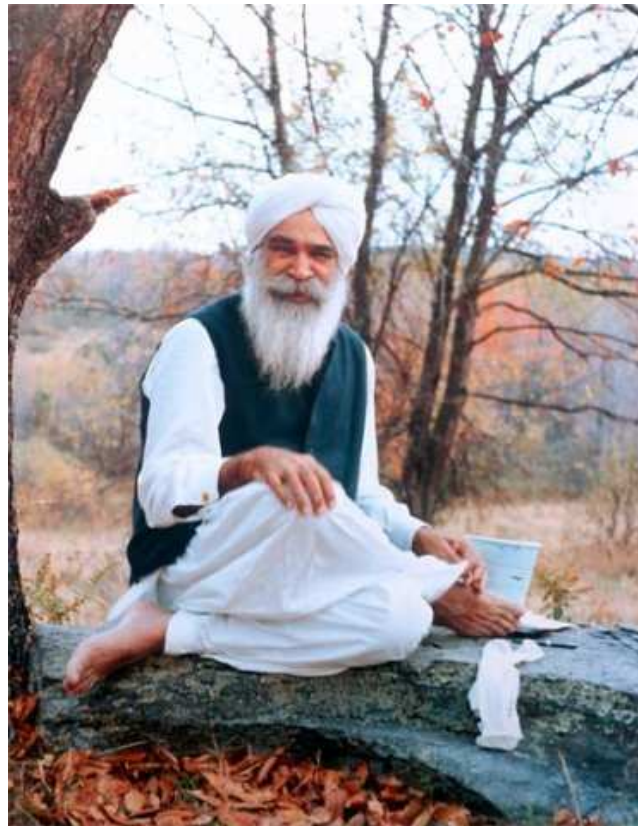


# Param Sant Kirpal Singh Ji

1894 - 1974

*Satguru in the Sant Mat tradition also known as  
Surat Shabd Yoga or Yoga of the Sound Current*

When you come in contact with Light and Sound Power within,  
you have not to adopt any virtues, but everything, all virtues,  
will come within you of themselves.



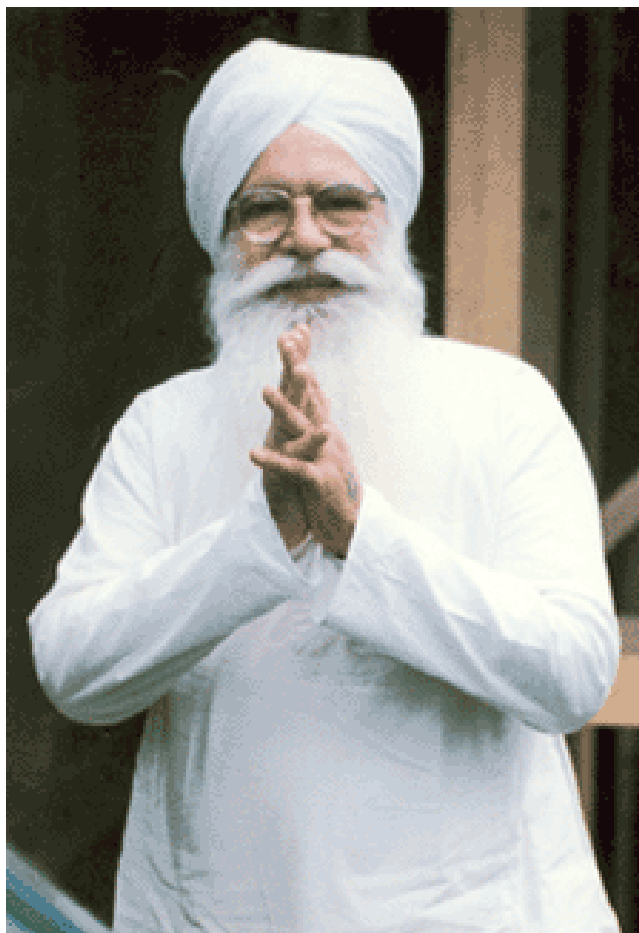
Once you discover this Light and learn to live by it,  
your whole existence will be changed. Love will permeate your very  
being and it will burst forth from the very pores of your body...

## Sant Ajaib Singh Ji

1926 - 1997

*Guru in the Sant Mat tradition; teacher of Surat Shabd Yoga –  
the Yoga of the Sound Current*

In the beginning we have to struggle very hard. In the beginning this Path seems very dry, very long, very tiresome, and very hard, but gradually when we start stilling our mind at the Eye Center, then we find sweetness, we find a lot of love from this Path and then we do not feel like giving it up.



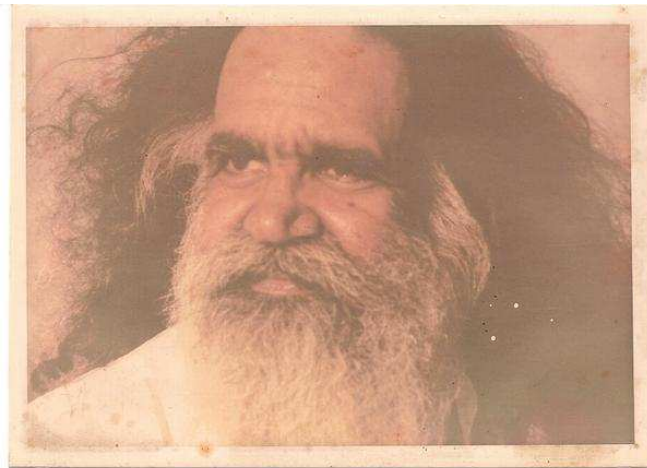
Each satsangi should always be determined to do the meditation; he should not go after getting experiences, he should only be determined to do his meditations regularly and whole-heartedly.

## Sant Darshan Singh Ji

1921 - 1989

*Guru in the Sant Mat tradition; teacher of Surat Shabd Yoga –  
the Yoga of the Sound Current*

Begin to live your life according to your aspirations, and step toward your chosen goal. Life is not worth its name unless we meet the challenge of the times. Play on the instrument of the heart even if it be broken.



Our regularity in meditation and the amount of our leisure time we spend in sweet remembrance of the Master is directly proportional to the extent of our passion, zeal, love, and eagerness to reach our goal in the least possible time.

## Sant Rajinder Singh Ji

*1946 – Present*

*Guru in the Sant Mat tradition; teacher of Surat Shabd Yoga –  
the Yoga of the Sound Current, head of Science of Spirituality*

Stop analyzing. Stop evaluating. Stop complaining.  
Sit and be still. A whole new world will unfold.



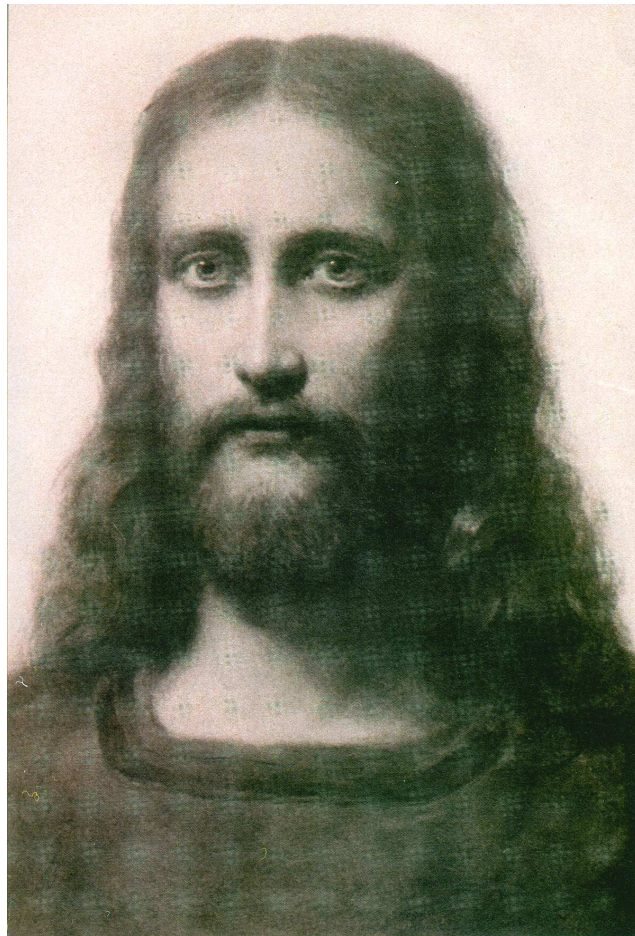
We do not have to wait until death to experience the worlds beyond.  
We do not even need a near-death experience to find the inner Light.  
It is waiting within each of us this very moment. Through meditation  
each one of us can find it.

# Jesus Christ

*6-4 BCE – 30 AD*

*Founder of Christianity*

The kingdom of God is within you.



Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.

And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.

All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.

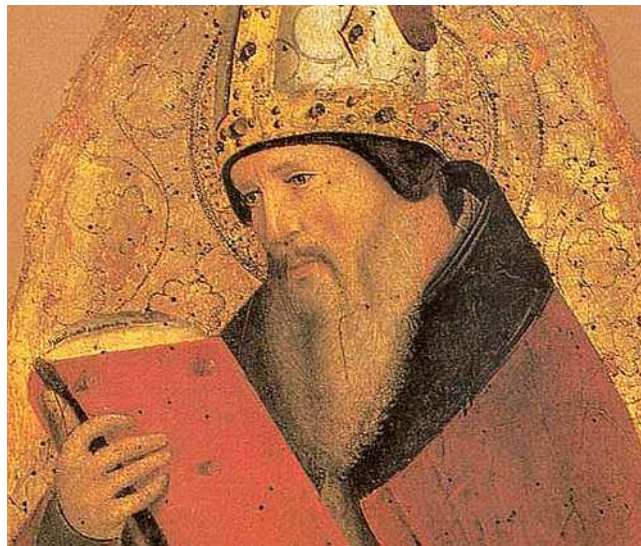


# Saint Augustine

354 - 430

*Christian bishop, mystic, philosopher, theologian*

Thou hast made us for Thyself  
and our hearts can find no rest except in Thee.



Complete abstinence is easier than perfect moderation.

## Saint Francis of Assisi

1182 - 1226

*Italian Catholic Friar and preacher; founder of the Franciscan Order*

Does every creature have a soul? Surely they do; for anything God has touched will have life forever, and all creatures He has held.



What is there to understand of each other: if a wand turned the sun into a moon would not the moon mourn the ecstatic effulgence it once was. We are all in mourning for the experience of our essence we knew and now miss. The cure is Light, all else is a placebo.

## Saint Teresa of Avila

1515 – 1582

*Spanish mystic and nun*

I wish I could give a description of at least the smallest part of what I learned, but, when I try to discover a way of doing so, I find it impossible; for, while the light we see here and that other Light are both light, there is no comparison between the two and the brightness of the sun seems quite dull if compared with the other. In short, however skillful the imagination may be, it will not succeed in picturing or describing what that Light is like.



During eight and twenty years of prayer, I spent more than eighteen in that strife and contention which arose out of my attempt to reconcile God and the world. On the one hand I felt the call of God; on the other, I continued to follow the world. All the things of God gave me great pleasure, but I was held captive by those of the world. I might have been said to be trying to reconcile these two extremes, to bring contraries together: the spiritual life on the one hand and worldly satisfactions, pleasures, and pastimes on the other.

## Saint John of the Cross

1542 – 1591

*Spanish mystic and author*

Until the desires be lulled to sleep by the mortification of sensuality, and sensuality itself be mortified in them, so that it shall war against the spirit no more, the soul cannot go forth in perfect liberty to union with the Beloved.



Live in faith and hope, though it be in darkness, for in this darkness God protects the soul. Cast your care upon God for you are His and He will not forget you.

# Prophet Mohammed

570 - 632

*Founder of the religion of Islam*

All creatures are God's children,  
and those dearest to God are those who treat his children kindly.



O Light of light, Thou art veiled to Thy creatures and they do not  
attain to Thy Light. O Light of light, Thy Light illuminates the people  
of heaven and enlightens the people of earth. O Light of all light,  
Thy Light is praised by all light.

## Rabia

717 - 801

*Sufi mystic poet*

I swear that ever since the first day You brought me back to life,  
the day You became my Friend, I have not slept – and even if you  
drive me from Your door, I swear again that we will never be  
separated, because you are alive in my heart.



O God, the stars are shining: all eyes have closed in sleep;  
each lover is alone, in secret, with the one he loves.  
And I am here too: alone, hidden from all of them – With You.



# Rumi

1207 – 1273

*Poet, theologian, Sufi mystic*

If I die, don't say that he died. Say he was dead, became alive,  
and was taken by the Beloved.



I once had a thousand desires, but in my one desire to know You  
all else melted away. From my first breath I have longed for Him.  
This longing has become my life. This longing has seen me grow old.



# Hafiz

1320 - 1389

*Persian mystic poet*

There is no one in this world who is not looking for God.  
Everyone is trudging along with as much dignity, courage and style  
as they possibly can.



Where does poetry live? In the overpowering felt splendor every sane mind knows when it realizes - our life dance is only for a few magic seconds, from the heart saying, shouting, "I am so damn alive!"

## Hazrat Inayat Khan

1882 – 1927

*Founder of The Sufi Order in the West and teacher of Universal Sufism*

The wise in all ages have tried to learn one thing only, and that was resignation to the Will of God. By doing this, they have reached a stage at which they could see from God's point of view.



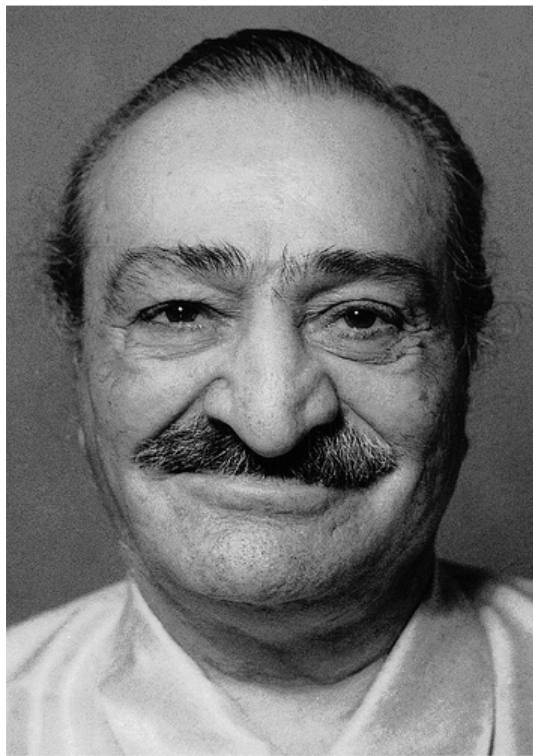
As a child learning to walk falls a thousand times before he can stand,  
and after that falls again and again until at last he can walk,  
so are we as little children before God.

# Meher Baba

*1894 to 1969*

*Indian mystic and guru*

The longing to go back to the source is present in each being from the very time that it is separated from the source by the veil of ignorance.



Be resigned to every situation and think honestly and sincerely:  
“Baba has placed me in this situation.”

# Krishna

*3228 BCE – 3102 BCE*  
*Central figure in Hinduism*

When meditation is mastered, the mind is unwavering like the flame of a lamp in a windless place. In the still mind, in the depths of meditation, the Self reveals itself.



Freedom from karma is attained after a long succession of lives spent rightly on the path.

## Mirabai

1498 – 1550

*Hindu mystical singer and devotee;  
one of the most significant figures of the Sant tradition*

In my travels I spent time with a great yogi. Once he said to me,  
“Become so still you hear the blood flowing through your veins.”



The clothes He gives me, I wear. The food He offers, I eat.  
Where He wants me to be, I stay. If He wants to sell me, I want to be  
sold. Mira says, my love for the Beloved has lasted through many  
rebirths, without Him I scarcely breathe. She offers herself to Him in  
all of her lives.

# Sri Ramakrishna

1836-1886

*Famous mystic of 19<sup>th</sup> century India*

He is born to no purpose, who, having the rare privilege of human birth, is unable to realize God in this life.



When the fruit grows, the petals drop off themselves.  
So when divinity in you increases, the weakness of humanity  
will vanish.

# Mohandas Gandhi

1869 - 1948

*Political and spiritual leader of India*

In matters of conscience, the law of majority has no place.



I know the path: it is straight and narrow. It is like the edge of a sword. I rejoice to walk on it. I weep when I slip. God's word is: "He who strives never perishes." I have implicit faith in that promise. Though, therefore, from my weakness I fail a thousand times, I shall not lose faith.

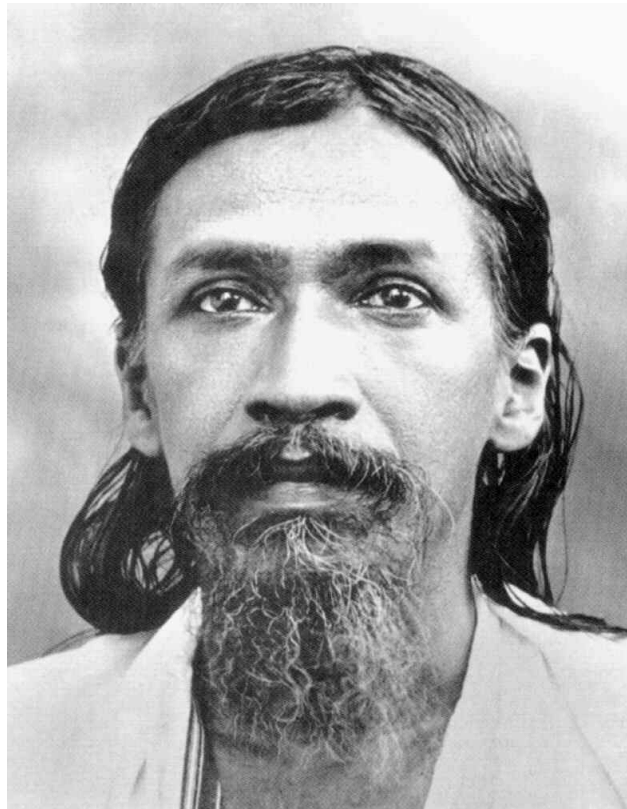


## Sri Aurobindo

1872 – 1950

*Indian nationalist, freedom fighter, philosopher, yogi, guru, and poet*

The spiritual path is one of falling on your face, getting up, brushing yourself off, turning and looking sheepishly at God and then taking the next step.



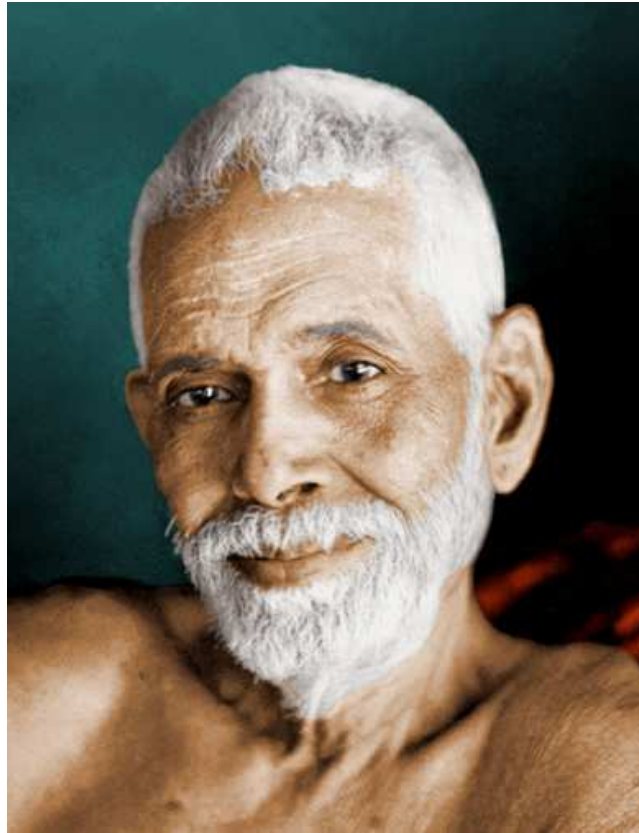
Cease inwardly from thought and word, be motionless within you, look upward into the Light and outward into the vast cosmic consciousness that is around you. Be more and more one with the brightness and the vastness. Then will Truth dawn on you from above and flow in you from all around you.

# Ramana Maharshi

1879 – 1950

*Indian sage and guru*

The last laps of all paths are the same - surrender of the ego.



There is nothing wrong with God's creation.  
Misery and suffering only exist in the mind.

# Swami Ramdas

1884 - 1963

*Hindu monk and guru*

If we surrender to God we do not have to make any choices at all.



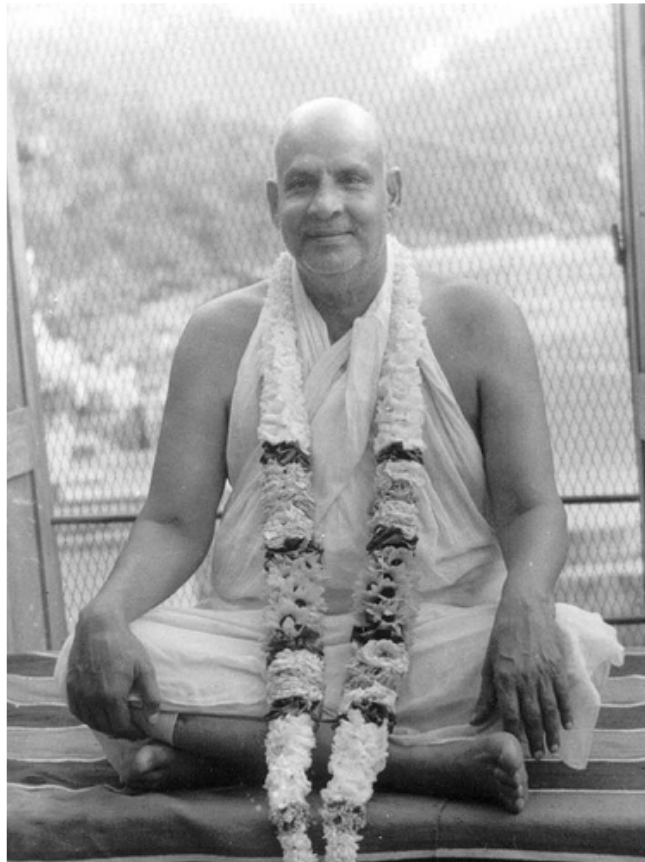
For you the outside will now stand transformed as the very expression or manifestation of God - everywhere the Light of God will dazzle your eyes; even in the apparent diversity and activity of nature you will strangely be conscious of an all-pervading stillness and peace of the Eternal - a consciousness which is unshakably permanent. You will also feel that you are liberated from the harassing dualities of life followed by the crowning experience of an abiding state of ineffable ecstasy.

# Swami Sivananda

1887 - 1963

*Hindu spiritual teacher, founder of the Divine Life Society*

God realization does not begin in a cave high atop the Himalayas. It begins in the pots and pans of the kitchen. Treat all of your tasks, however small, as opportunities to see God and serve Him.



A man of discrimination and wisdom is not afraid of death. He knows that death is the gate of life. Death to him is no longer a skeleton bearing a sword to cut the thread of life, but rather an angel who has a golden key to unlock for him the door to a wider, fuller and happier existence.

# Paramahansa Yogananda

1893 - 1952

*Indian guru and spiritual author*

If you really want to rid yourself of present bad habits you have no greater recourse than meditation. Every time you meditate deeply on God, beneficial changes take place in the patterns of your brain.



Change, even change for the better, is often approached with apprehension. In giving up something people think, “Will I be left with-nothing?” It takes courage to renounce the known for the unknown. It is not easy even to renounce a familiar pain for an unknown, and therefore uncertain, happiness. Rationalizations enter the mind-perhaps the thought: “Won’t God be just as pleased with me if I live a good, moral life? Must I give up everything human-everything normal, and be left in the end with, perhaps, nothing?”

## Sri Anandamayi Ma

1896-1982

*Swami Sivananda described her as "the most perfect flower the Indian soil has produced." She lived in a constant state of divine joy and bliss.*

Always bear this in mind: Everything is in God's hands, and you are His tool to be used by Him as He pleases. Try to grasp the significance of 'all is His' and you will immediately feel free from all burdens. What will be the result of your surrender to Him?  
None will seem alien, all will be your very own Self.



As you love your own body, so regard everyone as equal to your own body. When the Supreme Experience supervenes, everyone's service is revealed as one's own service. Call it a bird, an insect, an animal or a man, call it by any name you please, one serves one's own Self in every one of them.

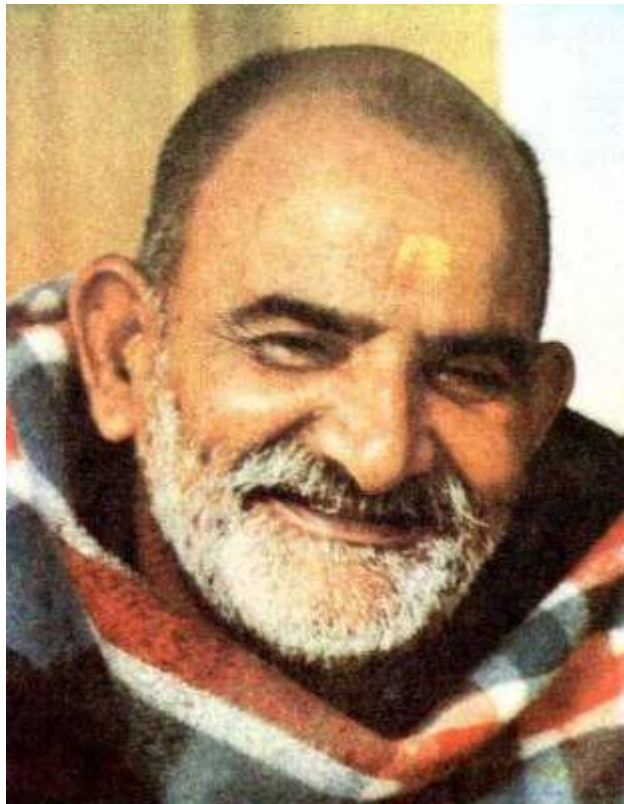


## Shri Neem Karoli Baba

? - 1973

*Hindu guru of a number of Americans who traveled to India in the 1960s and 1970s, the most well-known being the spiritual teacher Ram Dass*

Attachment is the strongest block to realization.



If you want to see God, kill desires. Desires are in the mind. When you have a desire for something, don't act on it and it will go away. If you desire to drink this cup of tea, don't, and the desire for it will fall away.



# Sathya Sai Baba

1926 – 2011

*Indian guru, mystic and educator*

Patience is all the strength a man needs.



The mind has a way of being drawn away by passing fancy.  
The mind is the enchanter, the usurper who has established  
sovereignty over you.

# Gurumayi Chidvilasananda

*1955 - Present*

*Current guru of the Siddha Yoga lineage*

Recognize that you have the courage within you to fulfill the purpose of your birth. Summon forth the power of your inner courage and live the life of your dreams.



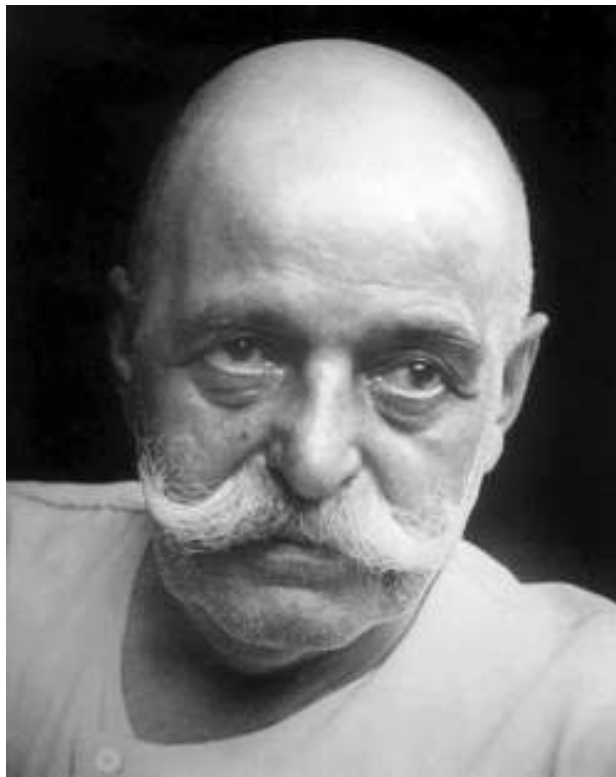
Even though we know that the bondage of the mind is the cause of suffering, somehow we don't want to become free from its clutches, because our mental fantasies, ideas, and concepts have created our life. When the time comes to free ourselves from these things, we feel we are going to flounder, we feel we will lose the reality that we have known for so long and have grown so accustomed to. We get scared, and even though we know the bondage of the mind creates so much suffering, we don't want to be free of it.

# G.I. Gurdjieff

1877 - 1949

*Mystic and philosopher*

Hope is effort, not wish;  
effort to make it so; not wish that it may be so.



If you help others, you will be helped, perhaps tomorrow, perhaps in one hundred years, but you will be helped. Nature must pay off the debt. It is a mathematical law and all of life is mathematics.



May your soul be happy;  
journey joyfully.  
(Rumi)

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